

Memorandum:

TO: Members of the Public Health Committee

FROM: Denise M. Romano, FNP-BC, APRN, MSN, MA, Acudetox Specialist,
NADA Registered Trainer, Treasurer, NADA Board of Directors

DATE: March 7, 2016

SUBJECT: Written Testimony on Senate Bill 353

Good Afternoon, Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter, and distinguished members of the Public Health Committee. My name is Denise Romano and I thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on SB 353 AN ACT CONCERNING OPIOID ABUSE.

I have been a Family Nurse Practitioner for 36 years, I have a Master's degree in Nursing and a Master's in Integrative Health and Healing. I am experienced in the National Acupuncture Detox Association (NADA) protocol for auricular acupuncture and am actively using it at the Substance Abuse Treatment Unit in New Haven. I can personally attest to the positive outcomes of auricular acupuncture with substance abuse, so much so, that I became a certified trainer and am a board member for NADA as the current Treasurer.

The NADA model is a non-verbal approach to healing that involves the gentle placement of up to five small, sterilized disposable needles into specific sites on each ear. The recipients sit quietly in a group setting for 30-40 minutes. There is also an option for beads rather than needles.

NADA ear acupuncture is safe, clinically effective, cost efficient (less than \$1 per treatment), drug free and compatible cross-culturally. The combined application of acupuncture with counseling, education and medical support enhances opportunities for success. Acupuncture Detox Specialists (ADS) are required to complete a 70 hour training and certification by NADA.

Among the benefits reported are: improved engagement in the process of recovery, less relapse, as well as reductions in cravings, anxiety, sleep disturbance and withdrawal symptoms.

The benefits of the NADA protocol have been substantiated through research showing it to be effective adjunctive therapy in Substance Abuse and Behavioral Health, with trauma, Disaster relief and PTSD to mention but a few. The military currently uses auricular acupuncture on the battlefield and for veterans suffering with PTSD.

In particular, I am in support of section 2h of Senate Bill 353. However, in response to the growth of drug-related deaths in Connecticut, I am respectfully requesting that the current

acupuncture detox law be clarified and expanded to assure that the NADA protocol can benefit all our at-risk populations.

The current acudetox law provides for auricular acupuncture in state licensed substance abuse facilities with indirect MD supervision. We are respectfully requesting to allow NADA-trained, licensed and/or certified health care providers : RN, APRN, PA, Licensed Addiction Counselors, Family therapists and Social Workers to use the NADA protocol in their independent private practices without supervision. In addition, it is our proposal that a NADA trainer may provide indirect supervision to a non licensed ADS performing community auricular acupuncture. In 30 years of insuring ADS's, there has never been a claim against any ADS.

Please note that the language in the bill and in Commissioner Pino's testimony is referring to acupuncturists. We are not, and do not claim to be acupuncturists. We are Acupuncture Detox Specialists. Acupuncturists actually have to take the NADA training in order to perform this auricular acupuncture protocol.

This would allow access to a broader population in settings such as homeless shelters, AIDS clinics, college campuses, hospice, hospitals and first responder locations which are all areas where substance abuse may begin.

Since 1974 NADA has advocated for community wellness. Providing auricular acupuncture enhances the menu of services for clinicians to address the current opiate crisis using a drug-free intervention that has been proven to support engagement and retention in treatment.

Thank you for your time and your continued support in addressing the behavioral health challenges we are facing in our state. We believe that together, we will make the difference.

Respectfully Submitted.